



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

COUNCILMEMBERS

Courtney Watson, Chairperson
District 1
Mary Kay Sigaty, Vice Chairperson
District 4
Calvin Ball
District 2
Greg Fox
District 5
Jennifer Terrasa
District 3

Minutes (approved, 5/5/08) Budget Work Session April 22, 2008

Chairperson Courtney Watson called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. on April 22, 2008, in the Ellicott Room, George Howard Building.

Members Present: Calvin Ball, Greg Fox, Mary Kay Sigaty, Courtney Watson, Jennifer Terrasa.

The Council discussed proposed capital budget projects with department representatives, as follows. Ray Wacks, Budget Director, participated in the discussion of all projects.

Police – Chief McMahon

P4920 funds computers in police cars. When the initial purchase has been completed, replacement will be scheduled on an ongoing basis and funded from the operating budget.

Fire – Chief Herr

F 5551, F5962, F5967- The Banneker Station and all other construction of stations is deferred for financial reasons and pending the completion of a study of standards of coverage.

Recreation and Parks – Gary Arthur

N3102 – Blandair Park status: Dept. plans to finalize a master plan in 7 months. They will have an open meeting in September at Oakland Mills High School. Then they will take the plan to design and construction. The State grant of \$300,000 was less than budgeted; hence, there will be an amendment.

N3103 – Parking acquisition – amount is smaller than in previous years due to funds available

N3108 – Systemic Improvements – Ms. Sigaty suggested leaving in language here or in other park projects to make clear that skateboard park development continues to be of interest.

N3108 – Kiwanis Wallas Park- Ms. Watson asked for specific information on renovation plans.

N3957 – Troy Park – This projects completion requires \$14 million in Federal funds. The county project is a plan.

N3960 – Robinson Nature Center—Mr. Arthur summarized the project and noted that the entire exhibit will be on how to build green. He anticipates a platinum LEED rating, which has increased the construction cost. The Dept. is cooperating with the Board of Education. Designs should be complete in October. Construction will begin in fall 2008 or spring 2009, with opening planned for 2010.

Mr. Fox asked for a study of the advantages (cost/benefit) of green construction.

N3963 Spinal Pathway – Includes consideration of improvements to the Rt. 29 pedestrian bridge

N3964 Alpha Ridge – Dept. will hold a public meeting within about two months. They will be doing some improvements, including some accommodations for the Astronomy Club.

N3965 Middle Patuxent – The Dept. has a project plan and will meet with the Trotter Road community.

N3970 Rec and Parks Hqtrs Expansion – The Dept. would like to expand into space vacated by Fleet Management. [This plan was later described as unlikely, given the plan to consolidate offices and eliminate rental space.]

N3971 Forest Conservation – This is a new project, funded by developer fees. Rec. and Parks draws these funds annually, but expects to exhaust the reserves in about five years.

Community Renewal (Housing) – Stacy Spann

U 7095 Housing Improvements – Mr. Fox noted substantial growth in expected funding in the out years and questioned the reason. Mr. Spann said that they have surveyed their housing units and found substantial work necessary. Questioned on the delay of more than a year in closing on Hilltop and substituting the federal funds for county funds, Mr. Spann explained that they intend to move ahead on this.

Agricultural Preservation – Marsha McLaughlin
This program is unchanged.

General County – Technology – Ira Levy

C0301 – Phone System – Mr. Levy explained that they have a five-phase plan for installation of fiber-optic cable installation and phone upgrades. They are working with HCC, the library, and the public schools and hope to complete phase 1 in twelve months. The project includes unexpected cost increases for switch replacements.

C0302 – Drawing Image Forecasting – This project is for scanning archives. There was a pilot project with the Department of Inspection, Licenses and Permits (DILP). The biggest part of this project is an enterprise system for content management.

C0310- Continuity of Government Operations

C0311 0 -- Public Safety Radio Enhancements – This project adds a 10th tower.

C0312 – Enterprise Resource Planning – The cost increase is mostly from the water and sewer part of the budget (an enterprise fund).

C0315 0 - Public Safety System Enhancements – This project has been scaled back to what is feasible to spend.

Other County General Projects – Jim Irvin

C0264 – System improvements – There is a study of 7 sites underway.

C0285 – Corridor Revitalization – This is funded by potential developer fees.

C0289 – Transit Operations Center – The extra funds are from a possible grant. They are re-evaluating the Tipton site because of possible problems.

C0290 – Court House – The Courts requested improvements to their facility when the construction of new space was delayed.

C0291 – Glenwood Community Center will close this week. Ray Wacks indicated that there would be an amendment to close the project.

C0297 – Facility Technology – This project is expected to close in FY 09.

C0298 – U.S. Rte. 40 Corridor Enhancement – Mr. Irvin said that State Highways has done their part of the enhancement. Ms. Watson asked if this project is delayed by the lack of a Rt. 40 manual.

C0299 – Waste Management – Explanation of status.

C0303 – Fleet Maintenance and facilities – This project includes a new building for the Bureau of Facilities. It combines a former project on Marriottsville Road with this project.

C0307 -- Neo-tech Incubator – This is requested by Economic Development and is in the budget as a placeholder.

C0309 – Land Acquisition Contingency Reserve – These funds were used to purchase the post office; the project replenishes the fund.

Sewer Projects – Jim Irvin and Steve Gerwin, Bureau Chief, Utilities

S6214 – The contingency is large; allows for water quality funding, if grant or loan funds are available

S6237 – Patapsco Conveyance/Treatment – New funds are the Howard County share (12.5%) of the costs of a major upgrade in this Baltimore City and Baltimore County project.

S6245 – Nitrogen Loading Reduction – reductions reflect a reallocation of the source of funds

S6259 – Lisbon Community Sewage – The Department is defunding this project, as the community doesn't want it. The rest of the revenue that was in this project will be used to fund an encumbrance in the FY03 budget for the county office campus project.

S6269 – Ashleigh Knolls Shared Sewage Disposal Facility – This is a shared septic system for 110 homes. The system has a discharge permit, which is updated every 5 years. This starts an upgrade required by the State to upgrade the discharge.

S6271 – Deerfield Drive Sewer Easement – The County is acquiring an easement for service to one property that will eventually include up to 7 homes. In 1975, an alternative easement was granted, but was never recorded in the land records. The County missed a second opportunity for an alternative easement when Springway came up. The County prefers gravity service, which doesn't have interruption of service when there is a power disruption. Mr. Irvin described several alternatives for serving the property and described the advantages to the environment of the plan encompassed in this project. The Department hopes that the parties, a homeowners' association, which is the landowner, and the developer seeking the easement, will reach agreement without a need for condemnation, but the project would allow the County to pursue condemnation. A condemnation would require separate Council approval.

Ms. Watson expressed concern about condemning land for private development.

The Council recessed from 2:45 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

General County – Government Service Campus – Aaron Greenfield, Chief of Staff; Jim Irvin; Cheryl Duvall, Consultant

Mr. Greenfield summarized the plan and explained that the objective is to end leasing space. Cheryl Duvall stated that she started working on this project in 1998; this is the fourth time that she has been involved in developing a plan. The Howard Building needs heat, air conditioning, and ventilation upgrades. She has interviewed representatives from 50 programs to update program requirements.

The Council asked for the current space occupied and the 2017 projections, from a former iteration of this project, for space needs of the County. Mr. Greenfield promised to provide this by Friday, April 25.

Mr. Irvin distributed a list of leases and an inventory of the county's property, previously requested. He described three phases of the proposed project.

The Council and Administration staff discussed changes in projected costs, reflecting in part contingency planning. They also discussed the proposed purchase of condo space at Meridian Square, particularly the possible lack of adequate parking for staff and visitors and the implications for assisting the revitalization of Oakland Mills.

The Council discussed with the broker advising the County on the Meridian purchase the availability of commercial space for rent, the rental rates expected, the expectations by lenders for the percentage of space with lease or purchase agreements in projects to be developed, and the usual parking expectations.

Ms. Robeson will attend Friday's work session to discuss the implications of the County's purchasing condo space.

The Council requested that the Administration provide the following information for Friday's work session: 1) an inventory of the land the county owns, 2) a description of how the sites for

sale were originally funded, and 3) a description of what use was intended for each site at the time of sale.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.